

(We) Give Us a Break

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Sunday, February 25, 2007

The results for Week 699, one of the change-a-word-by-one-letter contests that some people think we should run every single week instead of all this other stuff with jokes and cartoons and poems and such drivel, were -- we have to admit -- so clever and so abundant that we needed two weeks' worth of columns to share the worthiest entries with you. Also, this is a convenient way for the Empress to take a day off from judging and go lounge poolside in the Imperial Hammock, taking care first to don the Imperial Parka and Earmuffs and Moon Boots.

Report From Week 699

in which we asked readers to change any word beginning with E, F, G or H by one letter and define the result. This week we'll present the best of the E's and F's, with a whole set of winner and Losers. The best of the G's and H's will appear March 18. That week, the winner will also get the Inker, the official Style Invitational trophy, and the first runner-up will receive the magnetic Greek alphabet letters pictured here, brought back from Hellas itself by Kevin Dopart of Washington. (The letters are spelling out both the Greek word for "loser" and the English word phonetically.)

The rule for Week 699 was that the original word, not the result, had to begin with E, F, G or H. So, for instance, "flactate," a verb for a PR person's feeding drips of gossip to hungry reporters, couldn't go. The rules permitted a letter to be added, subtracted or substituted with another letter. Also, two letters could be transposed; several Losers realized that they didn't have to be adjacent letters. Also not qualifying: adding a number instead of a letter, as in Kevin Dopart's clever "GeiCO²: Global warming insurance," one of his 191 entries. (To answer your next question, no, Kevin is not on the federal payroll.)

For some reason, the single word that appeared on practically everyone's list was "fratulence," defined variously as a wafting from beer or kegs or college-kid dirty laundry.

4. Fuhrenheit: The temperature in Hell. (Brendan Beary, Great Mills)

3. Eruditz: A philosophy professor who can't figure out how to work the copying machine. (John Kupiec, Fairfax)

2. *the winner of the artsy tubes of Breath Palette toothpaste: Fearcical: Ludicrous yet vaguely alarming. "There's a fearcical rumor we're going to invade Venezuela."* (Martin Bancroft, Rochester, N.Y.)

And the Winner Of the Inker

Epigram: A maxim that brands the speaker as an old codger: "If God had wanted women to wear pants . . ." (Brendan Beary)

Not Ef Bad

Tedema: That jowly Kennedy look. (Kevin Dopart)

Educrate: To teach in one of the "modules" set up "temporarily" in the parking lot of an overcrowded school. (Ted Einstein, Silver Spring)

Elbrow: Extremely long underarm hair. (Ellen Raphaeli, Falls Church)

Emacidate: Go out with a fashion model. (Kevin Dopart)

Editore: Edited. (Peter Metrisko, Chantilly)

Demoticon: A little symbol signifying bad news on an e-mail from the boss. (Roy Ashley, Washington)

Tempress: Today, Mistress of the Domains of Chaos; tomorrow, just another loser. (Ann Martin, Annapolis)

Zencompass: Wherever you go, there you are. (Kevin Dopart)

Unergy: A condition that strikes people on the way to work, mostly on Mondays. (Janet Alexandrow, Springfield)

Ennau: The least exciting of the Hawaiian islands. (Brendan Beary)

Entrophy: The consequence of resting on one's laurels. (Bill Strider, Gaithersburg)

Eohoppus: A prehistoric kangaroo. (Brendan Beary)

Enguish: What elocution teachers feel when they hear the president on the radio. (Karl Koerber, Crescent Valley, B.C.)

Estchew: To stay on daylight saving time. (Bob Kopac, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.)

Stonia: A small European country with very loose drug laws. (Russell Beland, Springfield)

Engin: Gasohol. (Andrew Hoenig, Rockville)

Innu: How you feel upon seeing the same landscape painting you saw in your last six hotel rooms. (Dave Komornik, Danville, Va.)

Erstwhale: The success story in the Jenny Craig ad. (Jay Shuck, Minneapolis)

Nestrogen: A hormone produced during pregnancy that produces cravings for wallpaper with matching borders and dust ruffles. (Brendan Beary)

Estrogent: Someone who asks if the fabulous pumps are available in a 13 1/2 E. (Phil Frankenfeld, Washington)

Excaliburp: Sword swallower's reflux. (Marian Carlsson, Lexington, Va.)

Excretary: The office worker who seems to spend two hours a day in the bathroom. (Jay Shuck)

Exhillaration: what Monica almost caused in Bill. (Peter Metrinko)

Experdition: The journey to Hell. (Martin Bancroft; Mae Scanlan, Washington)

Excavhate: To dredge up an old grievance during an argument. (Mike Fransella, Arlington)

Macebook.com: For warding off cyber-stalkers. (Ben Aronin, Washington)

FAQu: The response to frequently asked stupid questions. (Ira Allen, Bethesda)

Yellowship: Cowards Anonymous. (Tom Witte, Montgomery Village)

Fiefdome: A state capitol building. (Creigh Richert, Aldie)

Fistipuffs: Very minor squabbling. (Jim Lubell, Mechanicsville)

Flabboyant: Proudly displaying one's girth. "In his Chippendales skit on 'SNL,' Chris Farley was amazingly flabboyant." (Brendan Beary)

Fatulence: That squishing noise of thighs rubbing together. (Jim Lubell, Mechanicsville)

Flimflame: To commit arson for the insurance money. (Howard Walderman, Columbia)

Loozies: All those women who hang on Style Invitational contestants. (Kevin Dopart)

Foaly: A elderly horse who likes to bother young colts. (John Holder, Charlotte)

Foresking: The best mohel in town. (Brendan Beary)

Fortissimoo: More, more, more cowbell! (Chris Doyle, sent from vacation in Bangkok)

Farterernity: An old boys' club. (David Franks, Wichita)

Forget-me-note: A Dear John letter. (Chris Doyle)

Faux pAI - When your Inker-winning gag about "Gandhi II" turns out to have already been used by some guy named Yankovic. (Andy Bassett, New Plymouth, New Zealand)

Next Week: *Stump Us, or The Battle of Hustings* (Mark Eckenwiler, Washington)

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